



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Division of Environmental Epidemiology
and Occupational Health (EEOH)

FAX SHEET

DATE: 7/12

of pages including cover sheet: 5

TO: Alison Hess

Agency/Co: EPA / Region II

Phone #: _____

Fax #: 212-637-4439

FROM: GARY Ginsberg

Agency/Co: (EEOH) Toxic Hazards Assessment

Phone #: (860)509-7742

Fax #: (860) 509-7785

COMMENTS: Advisory Press Release

U.S. EPA, REGION II
EMER. & REMED. DIV.
1999 JUL 12 PM 3:10
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

800412



Connecticut Department of Public Health

P. O. Box 340308, Hartford, Connecticut 06134-0308

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

Date: June 7, 1999

**Contact: William Gerrish
(860) 509-7270**

DPH ISSUES 1999 CONNECTICUT FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY

The State of Connecticut has updated the fish consumption advisory for the state's waterways. The 1999 advisory incorporates recent information specifically on polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in fish tissue and the pollutant's effects on human health. The change incorporates recent guidance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Great Lakes states and keeps the health advice consistent with developments at the national level.

The consumption advisory, developed by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), is intended to inform anglers and their families of the latest advice as the fishing season gets underway. The advisory, updated annually, this year lists two new waterbodies where fish consumption should be limited and features more conservative advice (less consumption) for fish containing (PCBs). The new advice is not due to increasing contaminant levels, but rather to a better understanding of PCB's health risks. In fact, PCB levels in Connecticut fish are tending to decrease.

"Locally caught fish are a valuable protein source that Connecticut residents can safely enjoy as long as they follow the consumption advisory," stated Dr. Joxel Garcia, Commissioner of the DPH. The advisory points out which fish have high concentrations of contaminants such as mercury, PCBs, or chlordane, thus steering fisherman who intend to eat their catch towards fish with less contamination. As mentioned above, there is no advisory for stocked trout; neither are there advisories for many Long Island Sound species. For other fish, the advisory lets consumers know how often they can be safely eaten.

"Connecticut's waterways continue to improve, providing more areas for the public to enjoy fishing and other activities. The fact that there are only a few additions to the advisory shows that a great many of the state's waterbodies are of high quality," said DEP Commissioner Arthur Rocque. "While some aspects of the advisory are more conservative, it is important to note that many fish in Connecticut, such as trout, are raised in hatcheries and placed in the rivers for anglers to enjoy."

Contaminants in fish are a greater concern for pregnant women, women planning to become pregnant in the near future, and young children; these higher risk individuals are instructed to restrict their consumption of affected fish more so than the general public. Fetal brain development is particularly at risk from both mercury and PCBs, and so it is especially important that exposure during pregnancy be minimized. If the advisory is not followed, locally caught fish can be the major source of exposure to these contaminants.

Major changes in the advisory are summarized below for specific waterbodies:

800413

- Long Island Sound: for striped bass and bluefish, the advisory for the general public for striped bass and large bluefish (>25") has changed from two meals per month to one meal every other month, a four-fold decrease in consumption. The advice for the high risk group for these species remains at "no consumption". Bluefish under 25" have gone from unlimited consumption to one meal per month advice for everyone. Other fish in Long Island Sound (e.g., blackfish, flounder, "snappers"- which are bluefish smaller than 13") do not have significant levels of PCBs and thus are not listed in the advisory.
- Connecticut River: there is now a specific advisory for catfish due to PCBs. The high risk group should not eat these catfish, while the general public can eat one meal per month. This is added to the existing advisory on the Connecticut River for carp.
- Quinnipiac River in Meriden: for the section which includes Quinnipiac Gorge and Hanover Pond, there is now an advisory to eat no more than one meal per month of any species. Recent surveys of fish from this section have shown elevated levels of PCBs. The new listing is added to a previous Quinnipiac River listing in Southington, which means that all sections of the river from Meriden north have some form of advisory.
- Union Pond (Manchester): there is now an advisory to not eat any carp, catfish, or bass due to contamination with the banned pesticide chlordane. Data obtained on chlordane levels in fish from a variety of the state's lakes and ponds last summer showed Union Pond to be the only one to have levels of health concern.

Existing advisories not affected by these changes should also be followed. A complete advisory listing is attached. It is important to note that there is a statewide advisory to moderate freshwater fish consumption due to mercury contamination. Those freshwater bodies not specifically listed are still covered under the statewide advisory. More details are available in the DPH pamphlet "If I Catch It, Can I Eat It?"

DPH Commissioner Garcia also noted that: "A new study by the Connecticut Sea Grant College indicates that awareness of the consumption advice is low, even among those who frequently fish. Only 63% of sports fishing families know that an advisory exists and only 33% know what it says. The level of awareness was lower in others who frequently consume locally caught fish, such as southeast Asian immigrants. This indicates that DPH needs to increase efforts to inform the public."

In response to this need, DPH has developed a fish advisory video in several different southeast Asian languages, with enough copies made for broad distribution throughout Connecticut's southeast asian communities. DPH is also developing a fact sheet for pregnant women, a high risk group for fish contaminants. These efforts are in addition to the distribution of DPH's pamphlet and DEP's posting of the advisory in 6 different languages at numerous waterbodies.

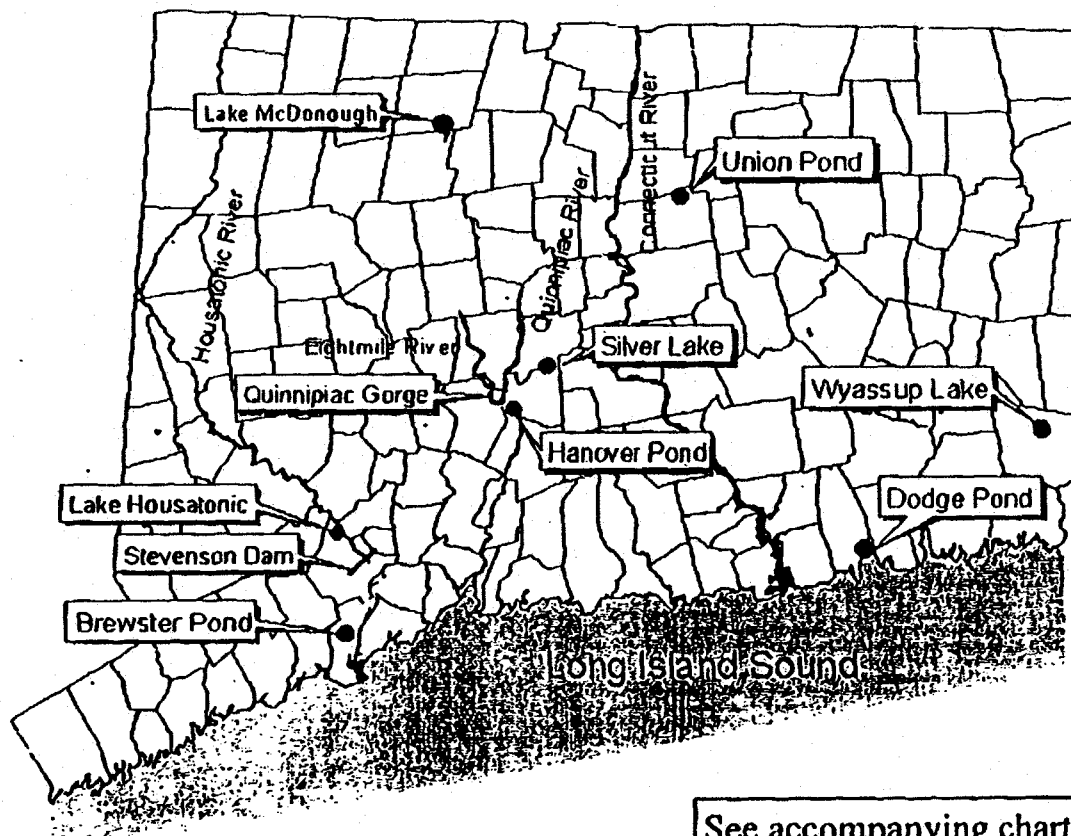
Consumers can decrease their exposure to mercury and PCBs by choosing to eat smaller fish (e.g., panfish) whenever possible. For PCBs, it is important to further reduce exposure by removing skin and other fatty portions of fish, and by broiling so that fat drips away from the flesh. The DPH pamphlet and video further describe key safety measures. Call 509-7742 to obtain these informative materials.

###

800414

Connecticut Safe Fish Consumption Guide

Waterbodies of Specific Concern in Connecticut's 1999 Fish Consumption Advisory
(All other freshwater bodies fall under the general statewide advisory)



See accompanying chart for species affected and consumption advice for each waterbody mapped.

Produced by the Connecticut Department of Public Health,
Bureau of Community Health,
Division of Environmental Epidemiology & Occupational Health

03/20/01 11:00 AM

HE03/PH/13

92:51 6661-21-TJR

800415

CTDPH Advisory For Eating Fish From Connecticut Waterbodies

Advisory Type	Waterbody	Fish Species	High Risk Group ^a Advice	Low Risk Group Advice	Contaminant	
Specific Saltwater Fish	Long Island Sound and connected rivers	Striped Bass	Do not eat	One meal per 2 months	PCBs	
		Bluefish 13-25" ^b Bluefish over 25" Lobster Tomalley ^c	One meal per month Do not eat Do not eat	One meal per month One meal per 2 months One per 2 months	PCBs PCBs PCBs	
Specific Freshwater Fish	Dodge Pond Lake McDonough Silver Lake Lake Wyassup	Largemouth Bass, Smallmouth Bass, Pickerel	Do not eat	One meal per month	Mercury	
	Housatonic River (above Stevenson Dam)	All species except as noted**	Do not eat	Do not eat	PCBs	
	Lake Housatonic	Carp and Eels	Do not eat	Do not eat	PCBs	
	Quinnipiac River: Above Quinnipiac Gorge Q Gorge / Hanover Pond (Meriden)	All Species All Species	Do not eat One meal per month	Do not eat One meal per month	PCBs PCBs	
	Eight Mile River (Southington)	All Species	Do not eat	Do not eat	PCBs	
	Connecticut River	Carp Catfish	Do not eat Do not eat	One meal per 2 months One meal per month	PCBs PCBs	
	Brewster Pond	Catfish & Bullheads	Do not eat	Do not eat	Chlordane	
	Union Pond	Carp, Catfish, Bass	Do not eat	Do not eat	Chlordane	
	Statewide Freshwater	Remainder of CT's freshwater bodies	Trout	No Limits on Consumption ^d	No Limits on Consumption	-
			All other fish	One meal per month	One meal per week	Mercury

** Exempted species are: yellow perch (Bull's Bridge area); yellow perch & sunfish (Lake Lillinonah); yellow /white perch & sunfish (Lake Zoar).

^a High Risk Group includes pregnant women, women planning to become pregnant within one year, and children under 6. Low risk group includes everyone not in the High Risk Group.

^b Snappers, which are bluefish under 13", are not on the advisory because they are not contaminated.

^c Refers to the hepatopancreas or tomalley of lobsters; lobster meat is not contaminated.

^d It is prudent for the High Risk Group to eat no more than one large trout (over 15") from lakes and ponds per month.